

Beckman's "Never After Happily" is a Fantastical, Fun-Filled Farce!
written by Isabella Dym, a junior at University High School

They all lived happily ever after! Or did they? Beckman's "Never After Happily" follows familiar, beloved fairytale characters beyond their supposed happy ending, when a writer, Ella, disrupts their lives by injecting the uncomfortable, messy truths of reality.

With flippant shrugs, sarcastic inflections, and comical expressions of disbelief, Alicia Barris expertly captures Ella's contempt for the overly idealistic nature of classic fairy tales while she watches the absurd scenes unfold. When Cindy challenges her skeptical beliefs about happy endings, Barris uses sharp, frantic motions that brilliantly physicalize her inner conflict regarding her anger with reality.

Opposite Ella, Annie Qiu as Cindy masterfully characterizes the elegant yet aging ingenue as a foil of the writer. Earlier in the show, her graceful, sweeping gestures and melodic tone effectively establish her as royalty, especially when watching her wedding with her hands clasped to her chest in authentic, reminiscent admiration. However, when Ella shows her more realistic endings, she persuasively expresses nervous reluctance by anxiously smoothing her dress and shifting her feet. Later, her acting shifts to subtle, grounded choices as she comes to terms with what a happy ending really entails.

Andrew Dove hilariously encapsulates the stereotypical mafia boss archetype as the Godfather, commanding both his henchmen and the audience. He powerfully cultivates an intimidating stage presence with stoic, cold expressions and slow, deliberate physicality that assertively demonstrates control, all while maintaining a convincing Italian accent.

With 39 costumes, the costuming team impressively conveys familiar characters by adapting their looks into a modern context while maintaining key character details, toeing the line between fantasy and reality. The wolf's costume exemplifies this concept beautifully: his grey suit is cleverly embellished with fur peeking out under the lapel, and the fedora has similarly fur-covered ears. The outfit feels nearly human, but the fur accents make it just off-putting enough to reflect Little Red's distrust and suspicion.

The marketing team executed an extensive campaign that included creatively themed shirts and various well-designed posters. Most notably, they collaborated with their school's film department for a promotional video that presents the show's themes wonderfully. Scenes with fairytale characters feature vibrant, hazy lighting, evoking dreamlike nostalgia, which contrasts dynamically with the dull, realistic colors of Ella's scenes.

Don't miss the magic of this wildly entertaining farce as Beckman's "Never After Happily" explores the story that begins after the last page!